Limestone Quarries Endangering GIR sanctuary Lions

349. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether limestone quarries entrap Gir sanctuary; and-

(b) if so, the steps taken to protect lions in the sanctuary?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) There have been some reports of limestone quarrying around Gir Sanctuary. HowevSr, as reported by the Forest Department of Gujarat, all limestone quarrying adjoining Gir Sanctuary have been stopped.

(b) An area of 1412.12 Sq. Km. of the Gir Forest, which is the habitat of lions, has been afforded protection. Of this, an area of 1153.41 sq. km. has been declared as an intended National Park while the remaining continues to be a sanctuary under the provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. The Asiatic Lion is fully protected against .hunting and commercial exploitation. Habitat protection and management activities such as habitat improvement, water conservation, wildlife health monitoring etc., are also underaken. As a result of these measures, the population of Asiatic Lions has gradually increased from 177 in 1968 to 3CM in 1995.

Declining Population of Tigers in India

350. DR. D. VENKATESWAR RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether population of tigers has decreased in India;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore; and

(c) the steps proposed to save tigers from poachers?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The all India Tiger estimation is conducted once in four years in the country. The estimated population of tiger during the last two estimations, has been as under:—

1989 — 4334
1993 — 3750

The 1997 Census is on going in some States and in others, reports are under compilation. The main cause for the decline of tiger population is the recent increase in killing of tigers to meet the demand of illegal international trade of tiger bones and other parts of tiger body. Fragmentation of tiger habitat due to biotic pressure has also contributed to this.

(c) The steps taken and proposed to be taken are indicated in the statement.

Statement

(i) A 'Tiger Crisis Cell" has been set up in the Ministry;

(ii) The State Governments have been advised to strengthen vigilance and intensify patrolling;

(iii) Funds are being provided to the State Governments for the eco-development of the areas to reduce the biotic pressure thereon.

(iv) A protocol has been signed with the Government of the Peoples Republic of China to coordinate bilateral efforts to stop illegal activities of poaching of tigers and to endeavour jointly combating of smuggling and the illegal trade of tiger bones and other parts of its body.

(v) A memorandum of understanding has been signed with His Majesty's Govt. Nepal to address wildlife related issues.

(vi) Steps have been initiated by the Government to establish the "GLOBAL TIGER FORUM" for strengthening international cooperation to curb poaching of tiger and to coordinate efforts for the conservation of tiger and its habitat throughout the range, (vii) In the X Conference of Parties of CITES revised resolution has been adopted for control of trade and consumption of tiger parts, products and derivatives in consuming countries, (viii) Higher allocation has been demanded in IXth Plan for conservation of Tiger and other wildlife on which the Tiger prey upon.

Development of Dahanu Taluka

351. PROF. RAM KAPSE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a communication regarding set back to the development of Dahanu Taluka and area around it due to the Government Notification dated 20th June, 1991;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) by when the action is expected to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The notification of 20th June, 1991 does not ban industrial activity in Dahanu Taluka, it only regulates such activity. The High Court of Bombay has clarified in March, 1997 that industries can be established within 25 kms buffer zone of Dahanu Taluka subject to taking necessary pollution control measures to the satisfaction of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. Developmental activities can thus be undertaken subject to environmental safeguards and hence it would not be correct to say now ihat the development of Dahanu Taluka and the area around it has received a set back on account of the Government notification dated 20.6.91

आग से वनों का विनाश

352. **श्री महेश्वर सिंह** : क्या पर्यावरण और वन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या उन्हें जानकारी है कि पहाड़ी राज्यों में प्रतिवर्ष जंगल की आग और अन्य कारणों से करोडों रूपये मूल्य के वन-ससांधन नष्ट हो जाते हैं, और

(ख) यदि हां, तो मंत्रालय द्वारा इन वन संसांधनों को नष्ट होने से बचाने के लिए क्या कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं?

पर्यावरण और वन मंत्री (प्रो. सैफउद्दीन सोज) : (क) जी, हां। यह सत्य है कि देश के पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों में वनों के बड़े भू-भाग बार-बार अथवा यदा-कदा लगने वाली आग से प्रति वर्ष प्रभावित होते रहते हैं, जिससे वन की वनस्पति, विशेषकर प्राकृतिक पुनर्जनन और पौद को क्षति पहुंचती है। इसके अलावा, वन क्षेत्रों में भारी चराई के कारण भी रोपित और प्राकृतिक दोनों किस्म की पौद् को क्षति पहुंचती है।

(ख) पर्यावरण और वन मंत्रालय 100 प्रतिशत केन्द्रीय प्रायोजित स्कीम, "आधुनिक वन अग्नि शासन पद्धति" के द्वारा राज्य सरकारों की सहायता करता है । वर्तमान में उक्त योजना 11 राज्यों में कार्यान्वित की जा रही है । उक्त स्कीम के अन्तर्गत, अग्नि रेखाओं को बनाने तथा उनका रख रखाव करने, वन अग्नि शामन के लिए हाथ से प्रयोग होने वाले आधुनिक उपस्करों, फायर फांइडर्स, फायर टेंडर्स की व्यवस्था करने तथा वाच टावर्स के निर्माण एंव अनुसधांन कार्यो आदि के लिए राज्यों को सहायता मुहैया कराई जाती है। वन क्षेत्रों में कराई का विनियमन स्थानीय समुदाय को शामिल करके किया जाता है और संरक्षण क्षेत्रों, अल्प विकसित बागानों तथा पुनर्जनन क्षेत्रों को चराई से बचाने के लिए विशेष प्रयास किए जाते हैं।